

**Solving La Jolla's Historic Parking Shortage
Council President Scott Peters, First District
For the La Jolla Village News, October 2007**

La Jolla has long been one of the most popular beach cities in Southern California. Between the sandy beaches, rocky Cove, and bustling Village, tourists flock to our community year-round. Residents, merchants, employees, and tourists all compete for a limited number of on-street parking spaces in the commercial and adjacent residential areas. For years, community groups have grappled with solutions to these problems. The hairstyles and hemlines—and hairlines!—may change, but the issues and concerns remain the same.

In 1979, merchants in the Village established the La Jolla Parking and Business Improvement Association to address the shortage of available parking in and around the commercial zone. In the mid-1990's, prior to my election to City Council, I participated in a citizen panel, exploring solutions to well-established parking problem in La Jolla. We looked at a number of ways to provide adequate parking for residents, visitors, employees, and merchants in the Village. Both of those investigations led to proposals to establish paid parking as a way to ensure that all users have equal and reliable access to limited on-street parking spaces, but were shelved. Still, the parking problem remained.

Last month, after nearly 2 years of study and deliberation, the La Jolla Community Parking District Advisory Board agreed on a parking management framework and opened up a 45-day comment period. The board, made up of residents, merchants and representatives from local community groups, recommended a number of strategies, including many of the elements discussed over the years. Those parking management tools include improved enforcement, residential parking programs, increased use of public transit, and paid parking for some of the Village's on-street spaces.

The board aims to ensure the availability of 10-15 percent of parking spaces in high-demand areas so that we can find a parking space with relative ease when we come into the Village. The plan recommends "pay and display" kiosks which, unlike their unattractive single-head meter cousins, cover a dozen or more spaces and accept payment by cash, credit, or debit, eliminating the need to fumble for coins in the ash tray.

The board's research shows that it's a concept that's proven successful in other beach cities on the California coast and the East Coast, and that it would discourage the current practice of circumventing time limits by wiping the parking enforcement officers' chalk off tires. I'm encouraged by the creative safeguards the board has written into its plan. It was reassuring to me to hear that there will be 30 minutes of free parking for all, so residents can run errands in the Village, and we can continue to support local businesses.

I'm told the plan also provides a way to protect residents in the neighboring streets from overflow, by posting a two-hour time limit without meters. In order to accommodate residents who need to park on their streets for longer periods of time, inexpensive parking permits would be available to residents and their visitors. The plan also encourages the

use of public transit through discounted passes and the potential of a shuttle system in the future, which would carry employees and visitors into La Jolla from the Old Town Trolley stop and other locations.

The board has discussed what the community could do with any revenue generated from paid parking—from the beautification of the Village's streets to the construction of an underground parking garage, which will help accommodate employees and other long-term parkers. Currently, 45 percent of revenue generated from paid parking in any of the City's six Community Parking Districts is returned to the community. I think that La Jolla needs and deserves more than that to implement its objectives and I would not support a paid parking plan without a guarantee that La Jolla will receive a percentage greater than that. Armed with a list of specific projects to improve the overall parking situation in the Village, I would work to convince the Mayor and my Council colleagues that La Jolla deserves more.

The Parking Advisory Board will take comments on the plan through November, when they will revise the plan to reflect those comments and vote on whether to forward the plan to the full City Council for approval. I encourage you to read the plan, available online at www.lajollabythesea.com/parking, and forward your comments to the board for consideration.